

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 191330Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1564
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2342

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, ET, SU, UR, YE, YS
SUBJECT: SUDANESE AMBASSADOR ON RED SEA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: SANA 2135 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY. SUDANESE AMBASSADOR AL-AHMADI RECENTLY TOLD ME THAT YEMENI FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ HAS OFFERED TO MEDIATE BETWEEN SUDAN AND EHTIOPIA BUT HE DOUBTED SUDAN WOULD AGREE. MEANWHILE, ACCORDING TO AL-AHMADI, YEMEN IS ALSO TRYING TO ISOLATE PDRY WHICH IS NOW BEING SUBJECTED TO HEAVY SOVIET PRESSURES TO MAINTAIN ITS PRO-SOVIET POLICIES. YEMENIS DOUBTLESS CONCERNED THAT ANY SUDANESE/ ETHIOPIAN WAR WOULD ALSO INVOLVE YEMEN ON THE SIDE OF SUDAN FACING NOT ONLY ETHIOPIA BUT ALSO BETTER-TRAINED AND BETTER-EQUIPPED PDRY. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING JUNE 15 MEETING, SUDANESE AMBASSADOR ABD AL-MAJID BASHIR AL-AHMADI INFORMED ME THAT ONE PURPOSE OF
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FOREIGN MINISTER ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ'S RECENT TRIP TO KHARTOUM (SEE REFTEL) WAS TO ATTEMPT O PERSUADE SUDANESE FOREIGN MINISTER TO ALLOW YEMEN TO MEDIATE BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA. AMBASSADOR AL-AHMADI SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS HAVE ALSO RECENTLY TRIED TO PERSUADE THE KYEMENIS TO PLAY SUCH A ROLE, AL-ASNAJ HAD BEEN MAKING THIS PROPOSAL LONG BEFORE THE SOVITS REQUESTED THE YEMENIS TO

DO SO. AMBASSADOR AL-AHMADI SAID THAT PRESIDENT NUMAYRI, HOWEVER, FLATLY TURNED DOWN AL-ASNAJ IN THE PAST AND HE DOUBTED THAT AL-ASNAJ'S CURRENT EFFORT WILL RESULT IN A CHANGE IN THE SUDANESE POSITION.

2. AMBASSADOR AL-AHMADI CONTINUED THAT AL-ASNAJ FEARS THAT IF SUDANESE/ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE THIS WILL ONLY PROVIDE A RALLYING CALL FOR MENGISTU BOTH TO STRENGTHEN HIS HOLD OVER THE COUNTRY AS WELL AS TO PERMIT SOVIET INFLUENCE TO GROW IN ETHIOPIA. AMBASSADOR AL-AHMADI SAID THAT ACCORDINGLY AL-ASNAJ BELIEVES THE BEST THING FOR SUDAN AND FOR THE MODERATE ARABS IS TO CONTINUE TO TALK TO THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME, WHILE ALLOWING "INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS" TO TAKE THEIR COURSE.

3. AMBASSADOR AL-AHMADI WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHILE TRYING TO MEDIATE BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA, YEMEN IS ALSO TRYING TO ISOLATE PDRY WHICH IT DOES NOT TRUST. PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI IN DISCUSSING PDRY WITH AMBASSADOR RECENTLY DESCRIBED THE REGIME IN THE SOUTH AS "DOUBLE-FACED." THE YEMENIS ARE NOW TRYING TO PERSUADE SUDAN TO AGREE NOT TO INVITE PDRY TO NEXT MEETING OF THE TAIZ CONFEREES. ACCORDING TO AL-AHMADI SUDAN, HOWEVER, BELIEVES THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO INVITE PDRY REGIME AND LET THEM MAKE THE DECISION WHETHER TO COME OR NOT. THE AMBASSADOR CONTINUED THAT IN LIGHT OF THE SUPPORT WHICH PDRY IS GIVING ETHIOPIA HE DOUBTED THAT PDRY WILL AGREE TO ATTEND THE NEXT MEETING WHOSE DATE AND PLACE HAVE NOT YET BEEN SET. CONFIDENTIAL

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3. THE AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT IN THIS CONNECTION THE SOVIETS ARE BRINGING GREAT PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE PDRY REGIME SINCE THE TAIZ MEETING IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS IN THAT REGIME. MANY PDRY OFFICIALS INCLUDING ABD AL-FATTAH ISMA'IL HAVE BEEN INVITED TO MSOCOW AND NOW THERE IS A RELIABLE REPORT THAT SALIM RUBAY'I ALI MAY ALSO BE GOING.

4. THE SUDANESE AMBASSADOR CONCLUDED THAT THE SITUATION IN THE RED SEA IS GETTING COMPLICATED AND DELICATE REQUIRING CAUTION ON THE PART OF THE MODERATES WHO FACE A DETERMINED FOE IN THE SOVIETS AND THEIR RADICAL FRIENDS IN THE AREA. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE USG WILL CONTINUE ITS STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENTS NUMAYRI AND AL-HAMDI WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS MODERATES AND TRUE NATIONALISTS AND LEADERS WITH WHOM THE UNITED STATES SHOULD COOPERATE FULLY.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN HEARING STORIES RECENTLY OF

ALLEGED YEMENI EFFORT TO MEDIATE BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA
BUT HIS THE FIRST RELIABLE INFORMATION WE HAVE OBTAINED
AS TO EXACTLY WHAT THE YEMENIS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DO.
EFFORT MAY WELL STEM FROM GENUINE YEMENI CONCERN THAT
SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA IS VOLATILE AND COULD RESULT IN
WAR WITH SUDAN. SUCH WAR COULD ALSO INVOLVE YEMEN ON
SIDE OF SUDANESE WITH PDRY RANGED WITH ETHIOPIA. YEMEN,
HOWEVER, ALMOST TOALLY UNPREPARED FOR WAR IN EITHER AGGRESSIVE
OR DEFENSIVE SENSE OF WORD AND WOULD BE LITTLE MATCH FOR
PDRY WITH ITS BETTER-TRAINED AND EQUIPPED ARMY AND AIR
FORCE.
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